Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 07170 060930Z ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NRC-05 SAS-02 /147 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4228
INFO AMEMBASY WELLINGTON
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AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
CINCPAC
AMEMBASY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY MANILA

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VIENNA FOR IAEA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENUC PARM ENRG EMIN AS EX

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE IN THE PACIFIC

1. WHILE AT DFA ON ANOTHER MATTER, RON WALKER BROUGHT EDITORIAL FROM YESTERDAY'S "MIRROR" (AUSTRALAIN'S LARGEST CIRCULATION DAILY NEWSPAPER) TO OUR ATTENTION. EDITORIAL REPORTED ON U.S. THOUGHTS ABOUT USE OF SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS AS A SUITABLE AREA FOR NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE, AND SAID "THIS PLAN IS ONE THAT MUST BE STRONGLY OPPOSED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. AUSTRALIA SHOULD COMPLAIN WITH NEW ZEALAND AND NEW GUINEA TO LODGE THE STRONGEST CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CANBER 07170 060930Z

POSSIBLE PROTEST -- EVEN IN THIS EARLY STAGE. THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE TOLD BLUNTLY THAT THE PACIFIC NATIONS DO NOT WANT THEIR AREA TO BE REGARDED AS A GARBAGE DUMP FOR COUNTRIES WITH NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES".

2. WALKER NOTED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF STORIES IN THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS IN RECENT DAYS ABOUT

USE OF PACIFIC ISLANDS FOR NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE, AND INQUIRED WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY RECENT DEVELOP-MENTS IN U.S. THINKING WHICH MIGHT HAVE PROMPTED THESE.

- 3. HE OBSERVED THAT THE "PACIFIC FORUM" WILL BE MEETING IN NOUMEA IN TWO WEEKS TIME, AND THAT PRIME MINISTER FRASER AND FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK WILL BE ATTENDING. IT IS THE GOA'S EXPECTATION THAT THIS MATTER WILL "WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY" COME UP, AT LEAST IN CORRIDER TALK. AUSTRALIA WILL BE PRESSED TO MAKE ITS VIEWS KNOWN. DFA'S PRESENT THINGKING ON THE MATTER IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED WITH USG WHEN DR. NEYE WAS HERE IN JUNE 1978, AND TO SAY THAT AUSTRALIA GAVE THE U.S. NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO BELIEVE THAT SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE DEVISED FOR NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE IN THE AREA.
- 4. WE ASKED WALKER WHAT HE MEANT BY "THE AREA"; HE SAID THAT FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, WHEN AUSTRALIA AND OTHERS IN THE ISLAND AREAS IN THIS REGION SPEAK OF "THE PACIFIC" THEY MEAN ALL OF THE ISLAND AREAS IN THE SOUTH AND WESTERN PACIFIC INCLUDING ALL RPT ALL THE US TRUST TERRITORIES -- EVEN GUAM, WHICH IS GEOGRAPHICALLY IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CANBER 07170 060930Z

5. WE REPLIED BY TELLING WALKER THAT HE AND OTHER GOA OFFICIALS SHOULD ASSUME THAT DURING THE COURSE OF THE NEXT SEVERAL DECADES THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE SPECULATION ABOUT POTENTIAL SITES FOR NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE. WE ADDED THAT WHILE WE READ GOA VIEWS "LOUD AND CLEAR" THE GOA SHOULD ASSUME THAT THERE WILL BE CONTINUING DISCUSSION ABOUT STORAGE SITES FUR NUCLEAR WASTES AND THAT IN FACT WE WOULD PROBABLY FROM TIME TO TIME EVEN GO SO FAR AS TO NUDGE THE GOA ABOUT ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN HELPING TO FIND APPROPRIATE, SAFE, AND SECURE STORAGE AREAS -- ADDING THAT OUR CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBILITY WAS NOT SERVED BY SIMPLY IGNORING THE PROBLEM, PRETENDING IT WAS UP TO SOMEONE ELSE TO FIND A SOLUTION.

6. IF DEPARTMENT HAS ANY POINTS IT WOULD LIKE US TO PUT TO DFA, WE WILL BE GLAD TO DO SO. BELIEVE THAT OTHERWISE, THE MATTER CAN BE LEFT LYING FOR THE TIME BEING.
ALSTON

| | Sheryl P. Walter | Declassified/Released | US Department of State | EO Systematic Review | 20 Mar 2014 |
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